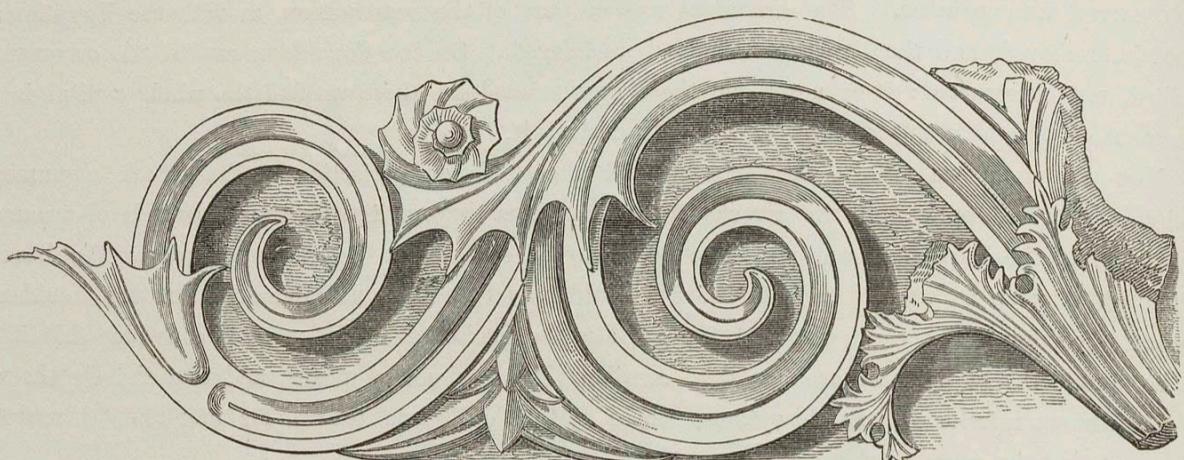


GREEK ORNAMENT.

generally received principle is sufficient to generate an entirely new order of forms and ideas. Roman ornament is constantly struggling against this apparently fixed law. At the head of the Roman chapter is a fine example, which may be taken as a type of all other Roman ornament, which scarcely ever got beyond the arrangement of a volute springing from a stem fitting into



From the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, Athens. L. VULLIAMY.

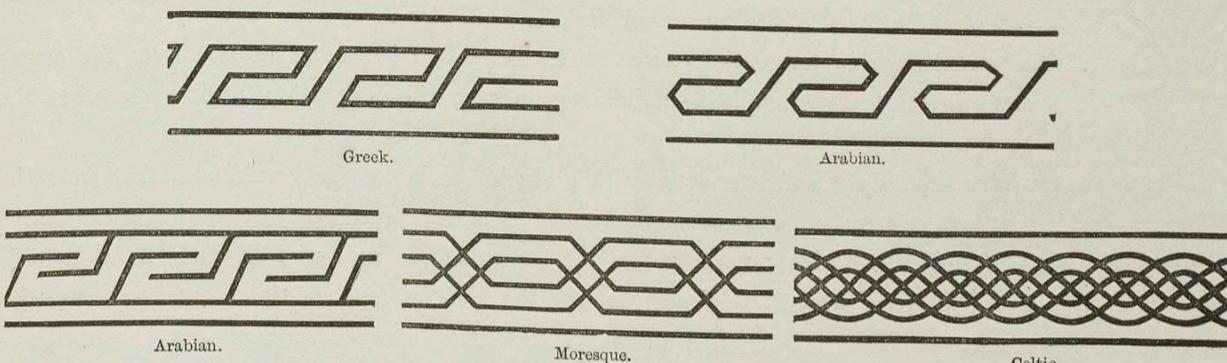
another stem, encircling a flower. The change which took place during the Byzantine period in getting rid of this fixed law was as important in its results to the development of ornament, as was the substitution of the arch by the Romans for the straight architrave, or the introduction of the pointed arch in Gothic architecture. These changes have the same influence in the development of a new style of ornament as the sudden discovery of a general law in science, or the lucky patented idea which in any work of industry suddenly lets loose thousands of minds to examine and improve upon the first crude thought.

Plate XXII. is devoted to the remains of coloured ornaments on the Greek monuments. It will be seen that there is no difference whatever in the character of the drawing to those found on the vases. It is now almost universally recognised, that the white marble temples of the Greeks were entirely covered with painted ornament. Whatever doubts may exist as to the more or less colouring of the sculpture, there can be none as to the ornaments of the mouldings. The traces of colour exist everywhere so strongly, that in taking casts of the mouldings the traces of the pattern are strongly marked on the plaster cast. What the particular colours were, however, is not so certain. Different authorities give them differently: where one will see green, another finds blue,—or imagines gold where another sees brown. We may be quite certain, however, of one point,—all these ornaments on the mouldings were so high from the ground, and so small in proportion to the distance from which they were seen, that they must have been coloured in a manner to render them distinct and to bring out the pattern. It is with this consideration that we have ventured to supply the colour to 18, 29, 31, 32, 33, which have hitherto been published only as gold or brown ornaments on the white marble.

Plate XV. In this Plate are given a collection of the different varieties of the Greek fret, from the simple generating form No. 3, to the more complicated meander No. 15. It will be seen, that the variety of arrangement of form that can be produced by the interlacing of lines at right angles in this form is very limited. We have, first, the simple fret, No. 1, running in one direction with a single line;

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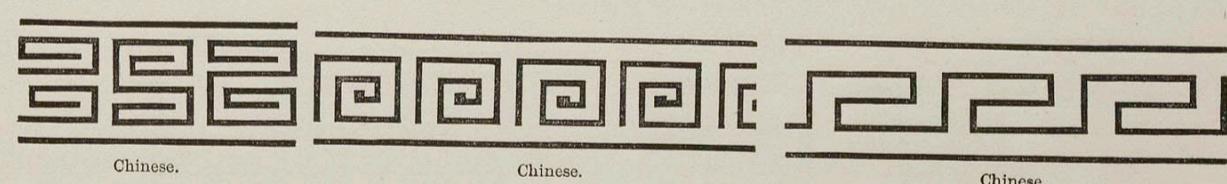
the double fret, No. 11, with the second line interlacing with the first; all the others are formed by placing these frets one under the other, running in different directions, as at No. 17; back to back, as at Nos. 18 and 19; or enclosing squares, as at No. 20. All the other kinds are imperfect frets,—that is, not forming a continuous meander. The raking fret, No. 2, is the parent of all the other forms of interlacing ornament in styles which succeeded the Greek. From this was first derived the Arabian fret, which in its turn gave birth to that infinite variety of interlaced ornaments formed by the intersection of equidistant diagonal lines, which the Moors carried to such perfection in the Alhambra.



The knotted work of the Celts differs from the Moresque interlaced patterns only in adding curved terminations to the diagonal intersecting lines. The leading idea once obtained, it gave birth to an immense variety of new forms.

The knotted rope ornament of the Greeks may also have had some influence in the formation both of these and the Arabian and Moresque interlaced ornaments.

The Chinese frets are less perfect than any of these. They are formed, like the Greek, by the intersection of perpendicular with horizontal lines, but they have not the same regularity, and the meander is more often elongated in the horizontal direction.



They are also most frequently used fragmentally,—that is, there is a repetition of one fret after the other, or one below the other, without forming a continuous meander.

The Mexican ornaments and frets, of which we here give some illustrations from Mexican pottery in the British Museum, have a remarkable affinity with the Greek fret; and in Mr. Catherwood's illustrations of the architecture of Yucatan we have several varieties of the Greek fret: one especially is thoroughly Greek.

But they are, in general, fragmentary, like the Chinese: there is also to be found at Yucatan a fret with a diagonal line, which is peculiar.

The ornaments on Plate XVI. have been selected to show the various forms of conventional leafage to be found on the Greek vases. They are all very far removed from any natural